

**SUMMARY OF THE  
ON-SITE ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE MEETING  
SEPTEMBER 19, 2001**

The On-Site Assessment Committee of the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference (NELAC) met by teleconference on Wednesday, September 19, 2001, at 1:00 p.m., Eastern Daylight Time (EDT). The meeting was led by its Chairperson, Mr. Alfredo Sotomayor of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. A list of action items is given in Attachment A. A list of participants is given in Attachment B. *The purpose of the meeting was to address items of importance identified in the committee's previously distributed meeting agenda.*

**INTRODUCTION**

Mr. Sotomayor called the meeting to order and reviewed the agenda. He introduced the committee's new scribe, Arlyn Brediger. Ms. Brediger is employed by Anteon Corporation, the company now providing contract support to NELAC. She advised members that the proceedings of the committee would be taped to help with preparing the minutes. Mr. Sotomayor informed the committee that no minutes were written for the last teleconference, September 5, 2001.

**STATUS OF ACTION ITEMS**

Mr. Sotomayor updated participants on the status of pending action items.

- Mr. Sotomayor completed a comment form for the Quality Systems Committee proposing new language for section 5.5.3.1. *To be discussed in today's teleconference.*
- Messrs. Santos Urrea and Faust Parker completed their reviews of Chapters 2 and 6, (2001 Standards) for consistency with Chapter 3. Mr. Parker did not find any gross consistency problems. Mr. Urrea found some instances where the term "evaluation" was used to describe laboratory assessments. Mr. Jack Hall informed the committee that he had not detected gross inconsistencies between Chapter 1 and Chapter 3.
- Mr. Charles Dyer completed revisions to the 1999 and 2000 Quality System Checklists. He forwarded them to the Accrediting Authority Workgroup for their review. The revised 1999 checklist was posted on the NELAC Website on September 4, 2001.
- Mr. Sotomayor sent comments from the committee to Ken Jackson and the AA Workgroup's "On-site SOP Subgroup".
- Discussion on Appendix D will be deferred until the next teleconference.
- The committee will listen to a presentation from Mr. William Ingersoll on uncertainty in environmental analysis.

### ***Comments to Chapter 5, Section 5.5.3.1***

The committee discussed the proposed comments to Chapter 5. There was some discussion on the practicality of notification within 48 hours after completion of an investigation. There was also moderate discussion on the possible definition of the terms “immediately” and “timely”. A committee member informed the group that Chapter 5 may be rewritten in a format that would mirror the ISO 17025 Standard and that version might address the concerns of the On-site Assessment Committee.

After some more discussion, the committee decided that they would still send the comment to the Quality Systems Committee to at least alert them of a possible problem. The committee also decided “timely” and “immediately” should be defined within Chapter 1 of the NELAC Standards to ensure consistency of the audit process. Mr. Sotomayor will write and direct the recommended proposed language to the Quality Systems Committee.

### ***Measurement Uncertainty***

The Committee had planned a discussion on this topic for some time. The concept of uncertainty has been given some attention since the promulgation of the ISO 17025 Standard. The Quality Systems Committee has been considering including uncertainty as part of Chapter 5. The On-site Assessment Committee understands that this eventually may become part of laboratory assessments and wanted some information on the topic.

Mr. Ingersoll discussed his presentation given at a Workshop for the Navy Interlaboratory Conference and his approach on how to estimate uncertainty in environmental analyses. Mr. Ingersoll favors a “nested” approach to determining uncertainty that through “backward induction” calculates a numerical estimate of total uncertainty of a measurement. Mr. Ingersoll uses results of quality control samples, in particular, matrix spikes, to assess some of the components of uncertainty in laboratory results. These estimates can be used not only to characterize an analytical result, but also to make informed decisions on selecting methods and laboratories for contract.

After Mr. Ingersoll’s presentation, the group engaged in moderate discussion on the topic. Some members felt that laboratories should not have to estimate the uncertainty component of activities that were beyond their control or for which they were not responsible. There was also some discussion as to whether using results of laboratory control samples or matrix spike samples was proper or justified, particularly for commercial laboratories. Some committee members stressed the importance of educating data users on the meaning of uncertainty estimates.

The committee thanked Mr. Ingersoll for his presentation and noted that it would follow developments of the Quality Systems Committee on the topic.

### ***Next Steps***

Mr. Sotomayor agreed to send a revised comment form for section 5.5.3.1 by the end of the day for the committee to consider. He would then forward comments to Dr. Frederic Siegelman at the Quality Systems Committee. He anticipated discussing the purpose of Appendix D, revisions to Appendix C, and any available developments of the AA On-site SOP Subgroup at the next teleconference.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

### **NEXT MEETING**

The next teleconference will be held Wednesday, October 3, 2001, from 1:00-3:00 p.m., EDT.

**ACTION ITEMS  
ON-SITE ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE MEETING  
SEPTEMBER 19, 2001**

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Date to be Completed</b>
1	Mr. Sotomayor will revise the proposed draft language of Chapter 5, Section 5.5.3.1 regarding the definition and use of the terms “immediate” and “timely” regarding notification of a laboratory error. Mr. Sotomayor will direct this to Dr. Frederic Siegelman, Chairperson of the Quality Systems Committee for review and comments.	09/20/01
2	Committee will review bulleted discussion points and share their thoughts to reach consensus on the purpose of Appendix D.	10/03/01
3	Committee will discuss status of Appendix C and consider any comments received from AA Workgroup.	10/03/01
4	Committee will finalize review of Chapter 3 for consistency with other NELAC Chapters.	10/03/01
5	Committee will meet via teleconference.	10/03/01

**PARTICIPANTS  
ON-SITE ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE MEETING  
SEPTEMBER 19, 2001**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>	<b>Address</b>
Sotomayor, Alfredo, Chair	Wisconsin DNR	T: (608)266-9257 F: (608)266-5226 E: sotoma@dnr.state.wi.us
Dyer, Charles (absent)	New Hampshire Dept. of Environmental Services	T: (603)271-2991 F: (603)271-2997 E: cdyer@des.state.nh.us
Friedman, David (absent)	USEPA	T: (202)564-6662 F: (202)565-2432 E: friedman.david@epa.gov
Hall, Jack	Interpretive Consulting	T: (865)576-4138 F: (865)576-8558 E: scl3883@aol.com
Ingersoll, William	U.S. Navy - NAVSEA Prgms. FO	T: (843)764-7337 F: (843)764-7360 E: ingersollws@navsea.navy.mil
Moore, Marlene	Advanced Systems, Inc.	T: (302)995-2290 F: (720)293-3706 E: mmoore@advancedsys.com
Parker, Faust	PBS&J Environmental Toxicology Laboratory	T: (713)977-1500 F: (713)977-9233 E: frparker@pbsj.com
Sheibley, Richard	Pennsylvania Dept. of Environmental Protection- Bureau of Laboratories	T: (717)705-2425 F: (717)783-1502 E: Sheibley.Richard@dep.state.pa.us
Uhlfelder, Mimi	Severn Trent Laboratories – Baltimore	T: (410)771-4920 F: (410)771-4407 E: muhlfelder@stl-inc.com
Urre, Santos	City of Austin Water & WW Utility	T: (512)927-4027 F: (512)927-4038 E: santos.urra@ci.austin.tx.us
Brediger, Arlyn (Contractor Support)	Anteon Corporation	T: (702)731-4233 F: (702)731-4027 E: abrediger@anteon.com